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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [BO](#)
SUBJECT: IOM BULLISH ON GOB TIP COOPERATION

Classified By: Charge Jonathan Moore for reason 1.4 (d).

Summary

1. (SBU) DCM, USAID, and poloffs met with Dejan Keserovic, Minsk Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to discuss GOB cooperation with the organization's anti-trafficking efforts. Keserovic expressed a generally favorable attitude towards the GOB and government policy measures to improve anti-TIP efforts, and mentioned several examples of increased cooperation from authorities. Keserovic also discussed the GOB's new three-year plan to combat trafficking, which includes a compensation fund for victims. End summary.

Better Relations with the Government

2. (C) IOM Chief of Mission Dejan Keserovic met with DCM and Emboffs December 18 to discuss his impression of the cooperation his organization receives from the GOB. He pointed out that working with officials has become significantly easier over the past few years. Approvals that once required extensive paperwork and lengthy bureaucratic processing now can be obtained verbally simply by phoning the relevant authority. In addition, the government has taken a more active role in strategic planning with IOM, increasing the number of TIP steering committee meetings from one to four annually.

Expanded Projects with Border Guards, for Children's Rights

3. (C) In response to DCM's questions about IOM's work with the GOB, Keserovic stated that IOM has entered a new cooperative agreement with the Ministry of Internal Affairs to assist the Border Guards Committee in reorganizing its personnel structure. The project is designed to increase the Committee's efficiency when dealing with trafficking in persons. In addition, the Ministry of Interior, together with IOM and the Red Cross will sign a memorandum of understanding to better coordinate efforts to safeguard the rights of children.

GOB Plans Rehabilitation and Compensation Mechanism

4. (U) Keserovic also discussed the GOB's new three-year anti-TIP strategy, announced December 7. The plan calls for, among other things, increased cooperation with international organizations and further development and distribution of preventive educational materials. It will also increase

focus on special care for child victims of TIP and expands efforts to prevent labor exploitation.

15. (SBU) According to Keserovic, one of the most interesting aspects of the new plan, though, is that it calls for the establishment of a rehabilitation and compensation fund to benefit returned victims of trafficking. Although details are still forthcoming, officials plan to model the plan after organized crime compensation funds used in Italy. That program reportedly used the appropriation of assets from organized crime groups to compensate their victims.

Comment

16. (C) Although the atmosphere for NGOs in Belarus is still very difficult, and they still suffer from red tape and bureaucratic harassment, anti-trafficking organizations, particularly IOM, have been enjoying an increasing amount of cooperation and support from the GOB. It is clear that authorities support anti-TIP organizations more than other types, and are making a concerted effort to cooperate with them. The GOB's new three-year anti-TIP plan expands existing efforts, and adds a new and very interesting victim compensation element. The mechanism is still in the planning stages, and authorities continue to discuss implementation and operational details. The obligation of GOB funds to this project and to their own legal efforts would be important evidence of the regime's commitment to fight trafficking in persons.

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